



**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE
VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING**

MINUTES

Wednesday, August 5, 2020

Meeting Held Electronically

PRESENT: Chairperson Pete Palmer; Vice-Chair Denise Pulk; Commissioners Marie Monroe, Mike Ragole, and Joel Stempil

ABSENT: Commissioner Steve Ziomek

STAFF: Kelly Corsette, Communications/Public Affairs Director

GUESTS: Tom Shannon, Fire Chief; Helen Gandara, Assistant Police Chief; Jill Baum, Police operations support

1. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Roll Call

Chair Palmer called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

2. Discussion and possible action to approve July 1, 2020 Veterans Advisory Commission meeting minutes

VICE-CHAIR PULK MOVED TO APPROVE THE JULY 1, 2020 VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES. COMMISSIONER RAGOLE SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED FIVE (5) TO ZERO (0) BY ROLL CALL VOTE. CHAIR PALMER, VICE-CHAIR PULK, COMMISSIONERS MONROE, RAGOLE, AND STEMPILO VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE.

3. Presentation and discussion regarding veteran programs within the Scottsdale Police Department

Assistant Chief Helen Gandara gave an overview of the Scottsdale Police Department's veteran programs and efforts to recruit veterans for both sworn and civilian positions. In 2018, Scottsdale Police Department, together with Heroszone and the Arizona Association of Chiefs of Police, hosted a bridge forum, which resulted in 26 actionable items related to veterans. Several of the items have been incorporated into the police department's strategic plan. In November of

2019, the focus of the Herozona National Veterans' Summit focused on specific issues related to hiring veterans into law enforcement. Reports from both events are available on the police department's website.

Jill Baum went into detail regarding current efforts to recruit veterans. The veterans' recruiting team focuses on participating in job fairs, forming a relationship with the Arizona Veteran Military Coalition, partnering with the Army and National Guard, working with Scottsdale Community College, and looking into a possible partnership with ASU's mentorship program.

Approximately 50 employees who entered the deferred retirement option plan are expected to retire within the next five years. Another 40 sworn personnel have already reached 20-years of service and could retire at any time. Ms. Baum noted that the application process takes approximately four months, and it would be beneficial to capture individuals before they exit the military so the process can begin before they are discharged.

Commissioners were given an opportunity to ask questions. Ms. Baum said that there have not been any significant challenges with administering the polygraph to veterans. Ms. Gandara said that the Human Resources department would have information on compensation for reservists.

Chair Palmer requested information on how many veterans are currently in the department and their positions. He mentioned that the VAC is establishing an outreach program to be aired on City Cable and offered the police department an opportunity to advertise available job openings.

4. Presentation and discussion regarding veteran programs within the Scottsdale Fire Department

Fire Chief Tom Shannon gave an overview of the current concerns in the fire department and steps being taken to mitigate them. He reviewed the history of the Scottsdale fire department, which was formed on July 1, 2005. When the department was created, 160 existing firefighters were retained as new employees from the previous service provider. Scottsdale's pension system matures at 20 years, which means that the majority of the department's employees will become eligible for retirement in 2025.

Chief Shannon said that marketing efforts have not focused on the veteran community as much as they should. The primary requirement for fire service is Emergency Medical Technician certification and a physical ability test. Typically, the EMT certificate training takes seven months to complete through the community college.

Scottsdale fire department is working with the Department of Health Services, Honor Health, and the community colleges to find a way to facilitate the transference of military medical training to qualify for EMT certification. What the group found is that DHS allows for automatic acquiring of state certification for those who are nationally registered as an EMT. All military branches with the exception of the Navy, train to a standard that is national registry standard, which means that those military personnel meet qualifications to apply as a firefighter.

The group is working to develop a marketing and communication plan. Efforts will continue once the COVID crisis has passed.

Commissioners were given an opportunity to ask questions. Chief Shannon explained that the fire department has no part-time or volunteer positions.

Chair Palmer requested information on how many veterans are currently in the department and their positions. He mentioned that the VAC is establishing an outreach program to be aired on City Cable and offered the fire department an opportunity to advertise available job openings.

Vice-Chair Pulk mentioned that Scottsdale Leadership offered an opportunity to go through the fire department training facility. Chief Shannon said that there is currently no targeted veteran recruitment; however, veterans are given preference.

Chief Shannon explained that firefighter training is operated in the Valley as a single system. Applicants all train at the same location and under the same standards. Scottsdale ranks in the top three in the Valley for salary.

5. Discussion and possible action to update the Veterans Advisory Commission work plan

Chair Palmer reviewed the Veterans Advisory Commission work plan and facilitated a discussion about which items are feasible for completion by the end of the calendar year, in the current COVID environment.

Task 1 – Advise the City Council by making recommendations on Scottsdale City directed military and veterans' programs, policies, and practices.

1. Identify existing City of Scottsdale specific veterans' programs, policies and practices

As part of the October meeting, the Commission will compile data collected to date from sources such as the census, homeless count, and veterans' organizations, into a report outlining statistics about veterans living in Scottsdale. The report can be updated as additional information is collected.

2. Develop/Recommend new City of Scottsdale programs, policies, and practices to support veterans

Mr. Corsette will follow up with the City of Scottsdale Human Resources Director regarding her recommendation on how to move forward with data collection and program development and recommendations during the COVID environment.

Task 2 - Educate the community on the status of military veterans' rights, needs, and contributions to our community

1. Identify resources and organizations that support specific rights entitled for veterans and increase awareness among veterans living in Scottsdale

Individual Commissioners will continue to capture data as it becomes available.

2. Identify current needs for veterans in Scottsdale, provide awareness of these needs to the appropriate government or support organization

Efforts to identify current needs of veterans and provide awareness of those needs will be postponed until the COVID crisis has passed.

3. Identify Scottsdale veterans historic and current contributions to the City of Scottsdale

Mr. Corsette recalled the presentation by Joan Fudala about historic Scottsdale veterans.

Commissioners will work to identify veterans, both historic and current, who have contributed to Scottsdale in some way.

Vice-Chair Pulk suggested that the Commission partner with the Scottsdale Historical Society.

Commissioner Ragole (on behalf of Commissioner Ziomek) recommended that everyone see the Thunderbird Field II Veterans' Memorial at Scottsdale Airport.

Task 3 (combined with 4) – Identify and recommend programs and agencies that can strengthen and provide support for veterans seeking personal and professional enhancement services.

1. Identify specific “needs” of veterans living in Scottsdale

Efforts to identify specific “needs” of veterans living in Scottsdale will be postponed until the COVID crisis has passed.

2. Identify programs and organizations that provide services and support for veterans

Commissioners and staff will begin creating a list of existing programs and organizations that support veterans and their families which can be made available as a reference for the public.

Brief discussion ensued regarding vetting organizations and the Commission/City making “recommendations”. Mr. Corsette will consult with the legal department for guidance.

6. Commission members' reports, updates and suggestions for future agenda items

The next meeting is scheduled for September 2, 2020.

7. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, being duly moved and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

COMMISSIONER STEMPL MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. COMMISSIONER RAGOLE SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED FOUR(4) TO ZERO (0) BY ROLL CALL VOTE. CHAIR PALMER, COMMISSIONERS MONROE, RAGOLE, AND STEMPL VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. VICE-CHAIR PULK NOT PRESENT.

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